



Maricopa County

News Release

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First WNV Activity in Equines in Maricopa County

(Phoenix) – A mule, located in Gilbert, has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first evidence of WNV activity in equines in Maricopa County. The mule was 25-years-old and was believed to have been infected during the early part September. A week after the discovery of the infection he was euthanized.

WNV is not transmitted from horse to human but rather to horses and humans by the bite on an infected mosquito. However, less than 1% of all mosquitoes are infected with the WNV. Although most infected equines recover, veterinary care is recommended. For more information on WNV and equines: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/wnv/wnv.html>

This summer WNV has also been identified in dead birds and mosquitoes in Maricopa County. No human cases have been confirmed thus far.

WNV is also transmitted to humans by the bite on an infected mosquito. Only 1 out of every 150 persons infected will become seriously ill. Severe illness is far more common among the elderly. More information on WNV illness can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>.

WNV was first seen in North America in 1999 in NYC and the virus has spread rapidly westward across the country. So far this year WNV has been identified in 45 states and the District of Columbia. The virus has caused 6,657 illnesses and 139 deaths in humans.

There are several measures each individual can take to prevent WNV infection:

- Eliminate mosquito-breeding sites around the home by removing standing water in potted plants, tires and other containers.
- Repair window and door screens to keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Avoid outdoor activity before dawn and after dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- When outdoors wear long sleeves and long pants to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outdoors wear a mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- Report dead birds to local authorities by calling (602) 506-6616.

More information on mosquito reduction and avoidance and reporting dead birds can be found at: <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/water/vector/backyard.asp> or by calling (602) 506-6616.

Maricopa County Department of Public Health will continue working to protect the community with an enhanced surveillance program including mosquito sampling and testing, dead bird testing, evaluation of equine neurologic illnesses, and evaluation of human cases of meningitis and encephalitis.